

**Vermont Tobacco Evaluation and Review Board**  
**Community & School Programs Committee Meeting**  
**March 24, 2015 and March 26, 2015**

Minutes

Present: Amy Brewer (Chair), Bob Uerz (AOE), Sarah Wylie (VDH), Rhonda Williams (VDH), Eoana Sturges (VDH), Cathy Hazlett (Health Connections), Kate O'Neill (VTERB)

Welcome Bob Uerz (AOE)

The committee welcomed Bob Uerz to his new position at AOE, and to the school and community programs committee.

Public Comment

None.

Agency updates

VDH: Sarah shared that she will be moving with her family in the fall. Rhonda shared that VDH has funding announcement from CDC. Next five years of CDC funding represents a change in funding formula. Vermont's poverty and prevalence rate resulted in a 15% reduction. In addition, CDC instituted a ceiling and floor funding structure. VDH applied for the ceiling, and CDC awarded all but \$61K. Overall this represents a 20% reduction in VDH's CDC budget. CDC notified VDH that while VDH did not receive the competitive funding, they will be able to reapply in the next year or two. Rhonda will share key comments on the CDC application. In addition, the Governors FY16 budget proposal includes a \$45K reduction in VDH state tobacco funding.

VDH is applying for additional grants such as through Dartmouth and the health promotion research center. The Quitline enhancement grant is a non-competitive grant through CDC, but Vermont gets the minimum allocation which is \$50,000. This pays for staff work to engage with disparate adult populations to reduce prevalence, media outreach and health systems change.

Eoana shared that regional data information on youth access to the Quitline is available through National Jewish. VDH is looking at Rhode Island's program (text-based outreach). In addition, VDH will spend \$12K on the smokefree.gov promotion which is a youth campaign that runs at end of school year. VDH will then look at metrics to determine if it is worth repeating.

Bob shared that schools are grappling with the issue of youth e-cigarette use. Schools are looking for some help.

Does Vermont want to look at media currently being done in California to edit and adapt to Vermont's media outreach in early FY16? Seems like there's a very important opportunity to reach youth that we are missing. We would like to intentionally discuss this at the cessation committee meetings so that we can make some deliberate recommendations for serving youth better going forward.

*Action: bring the above discussion to the next cessation committee meeting.*

AOE updates: Bob has been working at AOE for three weeks now. Grant program in place at AOE, which continues into next year, reaches 50 SU's across the state and has six elements: curriculum, assessment, policy, tobacco-use cessation, youth asset development, and community engagement. There have been some success stories around youth cessation, use of SAPs in identifying students and connecting them to existing N-O-T programs. ALA has chosen not to expand N-O-T to an on-line venue, but it is still a key programmatic opportunity for schools.

DLC updates: on FDA work, Amy shared that with less funding and changes to the payment process, FDA is losing a couple of investigators. Amy has to restructure assignments in order to meet requirements of the contract and make changes to the structure and process. Overall, compliance check process is going well.

#### CounterBalance timeline presentation (Sarah Wylie, VDH)

Sarah provided the committee with a timeline for the counterbalance campaign in the spring. (included in the supporting documentation on VTERB website committee section).

## VDH budget discussion

Rhonda provided highlights: VDH has sustained a series of cuts. With latest CDC cut, there are some shifts of funding over to the MSA column of their budget. It is important to preserve infrastructure, and that includes some training. While much funding is cut from CAI training contract, some will still remain. Funding to Rutland for tobacco cessation referrals is now cut from the budget. There are also some cuts to media funding in the contract to Rescue Social Change. The Commissioner's office has advised not to reduce coalitions across the board (~\$2800 per coalition), but instead to cut one coalition determined to be least impactful in tobacco prevention (~\$40K). VDH also tried to absorb some evaluation services into their budget.

Sarah mentioned that criteria for determining cuts in grant funding to community coalitions are critical. A few ideas include: population served, size of geographic area served, outcomes, poverty, social equity, etc. If one coalition goes away, can others absorb the work in a larger geographic area? Because coalition funding supports approximately 90% in salaries, losing a coalition means losing staffing capacity.

Should VDH reduce the training contract even further? There's a price to that. If training contract were no longer provided, VDH staff would pick up training and have less time for policy and youth engagement. But maybe VDH could take advantage of more national webinars. A hybrid approach might be to reduce training, rely more on webinars, and develop Vermont-specific implementation support and resources. Maybe utilizing other coalitions for more peer training. VDH could still assist in logistics. Added benefit could be more engagement, leadership development, and perhaps improved sustainability over time.

Options the committee discussed:

- Reduce 1 coalition (\$45K) based upon specific criteria
- Reduce training budget (more in-house)
- Reinforced/synergistic funding between VDH and AOE including technical training model (reimbursable mini-grants/subcontracts)

Sarah reminded the committee that current VKAT/OVX grants are coming to a close for FY15 by the end of April, and schools are expecting a second year of funding, so if VDH cuts this line in the budget, it is important to discuss how to address the change.

Recommendations include: reduce FY16 training budget, in order to not lose infrastructure by the reduction of a coalition. Or cut one coalition and a portion of the

training budget and then redistribute funding to remaining coalitions, asking coalitions to absorb more adjacent towns.

#### Discuss VTERB progress updates

Amy discussed updates in the legislature. Cut proposed to TCP is \$244K. \$45K cut to VDH and \$199K to AHS which includes administrator position and evaluation contract. In testimony, the Board was successful in communicating the importance of maintaining an independent Board with all its powers and duties and the independent evaluation contract. Advocates are working daily to try to restore funding.

#### Youth engagement and asset development discussion

Rhonda asked the committee to strategize around prevention funds and youth engagement and how we can leverage funds and enhance results as purposefully as possible. Sarah provided a strategy idea around youth engagement activities that would include a reimbursement for travel and events. It would eliminate stipends for school-based coordinators. \$55K in this current year, but FY16 proposal reduces it and combines it with CDC mini-grant. There are several coalitions that could take on the work.

Are there opportunities to leverage VDH and AOE youth funding in order to build synergies in the system? Can we get youth engagement outcomes all the while being more efficient with funding?

Another strategy idea that came up is one statewide coordinator that develops an action plan and entities sign on if youth engagement was desired. Any campaign that affects youth would be part of it: point of sale, for example.

Bob agrees that we need to look at this as not an immediate solution, but as an evolutionary process. Bob is interested in researching the school-based strategies that will have the most impact in order to determine how to focus the funds. We have to be better prepared to track and communicate the outcomes.

#### Next Steps:

*Kate will schedule conference call for this Thursday afternoon (March 26<sup>th</sup>) to wrap-up budget discussion.*

Minutes from March 26<sup>th</sup> committee conference call 3:00-3:30pm

Present: Amy Brewer (Chair), Bob Uerz (AOE), Sarah Wylie (VDH), Rhonda Williams (VDH), Eoana Sturges (VDH), Rebecca Ryan (ALA), Kate O'Neill (VTERB), Lindsay Simpson (AOE)

Public Comment

None

VDH FY16 budget discussion. Potential options being discussed:

- Reduce 1 coalition (approximately \$45K) based upon specific criteria
- Reduce training budget (possibly providing more in-house training) in order to not lose infrastructure by the reduction of a coalition
- Reduce one coalition and a portion of the training budget, redistribute funding to remaining coalitions, asking coalitions to absorb more adjacent towns.
- Other...?

Sarah suggested best solution may be to reduce training because we have learned much from CAI and reduction in training represents decreasing funding for an out of state contractor, versus decreased in-state funding impacting community coalition infrastructure. However, she questioned whether cutting back on training and doing more in-house and peer-to-peer training is feasible. The committee discussed the value of maintaining infrastructure for community programs. The options being considered have the potential to weaken infrastructure. In terms of sustainability, VDH would like to strive for 100% community-based program coverage and this could be accomplished in the future.

Rebecca asked if a recommendation could come from the Board to allocate \$45,000 from the Legislature for one-time funding to the VDH in order to level fund VDH so they do not have to cut funding to a coalition or consider any of the other above solutions. Meanwhile, the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Vermont could argue to secure some of the RJ Reynolds \$1mil settlement funding—currently allocated to programs, towns, and initiatives not related to tobacco control—or suggest that the remainder of the trust fund dollars be used to fund a coalition.

It was determined that any discussion and decisions about VTERB addressing the Legislature or Administration around the three-year sustainability agreement and/or alternative use of funds needs to happen with and come from the full Board.

The school and community programs committee recommends that VDH not determine specific cuts to prevention funds yet. The full Board will determine next steps at the April meeting and would like to defer final funding decisions until the June VTERB meeting. Efforts in prevention funding should consider balance between coalition, training, and/or other adjustments.

#### Next Steps

*Amy (as committee Chair) will provide summary of committee discussions at VTERB April meeting and will provide committee recommendation that VDH not determine specific cuts to prevention funds yet. The full Board needs to determine next steps at the April meeting and make final funding decisions at the June VTERB meeting.*

**Next meeting: May 12, 2015**

**AHS Mountain View Conference Room, 208 Hurricane Lane, Williston 1:00-3:00pm**